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By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

To be continued every THURSDAY.

THURSDAY, *December* the 11th, 1755.

STEPPING into a coffee-houſe in the Strand the other day, I ſaw a ſet of young fellows laughing very heartily over an old ſeſſions-paper. The gravity of my appearance would not permit me to make any enquiry about what they were reading; I therefore waited with ſome impatience for their departure, and as ſoon as they were gone, took up the paper as it lay open, and found the ſubject of their mirth to have been the trial of a young lad of ſeventeen, for robbing a ſervant maid of her pockets in St. Paul's church-yard. The evidence of the maid was in the following words.

"AND

" And pleaſe you, my lord, I had been with ano-
" ther maid-ſervant at Drury-lane playhouſe to ſee the
" Country Wife. A baddiſh ſort of a play to be ſure
" it turned out; and I wiſh it did not put ſome wicked
" thoughts into the head of my fellow-ſervant; for ſhe
" gave me the ſlip in the playhouſe paſſage, and did not
" come home all night. So walking all alone by my-
" ſelf through St. Paul's church-yard, the priſoner
" overtook me, and would needs have a kiſs of me.
" Oho! young ſpark, thought I to myſelf, we have
" all been at the play I believe; but if a kiſs will con-
" tent you, why e'en take it, and go about your buſi-
" neſs; for you ſhall have nothing more from me, I
" promiſe you. This I ſaid to myſelf, my lord, while
" the young man was kiſſing me; but, my lord, he
" went on to be quite audacious; ſo I ſtood ſtock-ſtill
" againſt the wall, without ſo much as ſpeaking a word;
" for I had a mind to ſee how far his impudence would
" carry him. But all at once, and pleaſe you, when I
" was thinking of no ſuch thing, crack went my pock-
" et-ſtrings, and away ran the young man with my
" pockets in his hand. And then I thought it was
" high time to cry out; ſo I roared out murder and
" ſtop thief, till the watchmen took hold of him, and
" carried us both before the conſtable. And pleaſe
" you, my lord, I was never in ſuch a flurry in my
" life; for who would have thought of any ſuch thing
" from ſo good-looking a young man? So I ſtood ſtock-
" ſtill, as I told you before, without ſo much as ſtir-
" ring a finger; for as he was ſo young a man, I had
" a great curioſity to ſee how far his impudence would
" carry him."

The

THE extreme honeſty of this evidence pleaſed me not a little; and I could not help thinking that it might afford a very excellent leſſon to thoſe of my fair readers, who are ſometimes for indulging their curioſity upon occaſions where it would be prudence to ſuppreſs it, and for holding their tongues when they ſhould be moſt ready to cry out.

MANY a female in genteeler life, has, I believe, indulged the ſame curioſity with this poor girl, without coming off ſo well, though the thief has never been brought to his trial at the Old Bailey for the robbery he has committed: indeed, the watchmen are uſually aſleep that ſhould ſeize upon ſuch thieves, unleſs it be now and then a huſband or a father; but the plunder is never to be reſtored.

To ſay the truth, the great deſtroyer of female honour is curioſity. It was the frailty of our firſt mother, and has deſcended in a double portion to almoſt every individual of her daughters. There are two kinds of it that I would particularly caution my fair country-women againſt: one is the curioſity above-mentioned, that of trying how far a man's impudence will carry him; and the other, that of knowing exactly their own ſtrength, and how far they may ſuffer themſelves to be tempted, and retreat with honour. I would alſo adviſe them to guard their pockets as well as their perſons againſt the treachery of men: for in this age of play, it may be an undetermined point whether their deſigns are moſt upon a lady's purſe or her honour: nor indeed is it eaſy to ſay, when the attack is made upon the purſe, whether it may not be a prelude to a more dangerous theft.

IT uſed formerly to be the practice, when a man had deſigns upon the virtue of a woman, to inſinuate himſelf into

into her good graces by taking every opportunity of loſing his money to her at cards. But the policy of the times has inverted this practice; and the way now to make ſure of a woman is to ſtrip her of her money, and run her deeply in debt: for loſſes at cards are to be paid one way or other, or there is no poſſibility of appearing in company; and of what value is a lady's virtue, if ſhe is always to ſtay at home with it?

A VERY gay young fellow of my acquaintance was complaining to me the other day of his extreme ill fortune at picquet. He told me that he had a very narrow miſs of compleatly undreſſing one of the fineſt women about St. James's, but that an unfortunate repique had diſappointed him of his hopes. The lady, it ſeems, had played with him at her own houſe till all her ready money was gone; and upon his refuſing to proceed with her upon credit, ſhe conſented to his ſetting a ſmall ſum againſt her cap, which he won and put into his pocket, and afterwards her handkerchief; but that ſtaking both cap and handkerchief and all his winnings againſt her tucker, he was moſt cruelly repiqued when he wanted but two points of the game, and obliged to leave the lady as well dreſſed as he found her.

THIS was indeed a very critical turn of fortune for the lady: for if ſhe had gone on loſing from top to bottom, what the laſt ſtake might have been I almoſt tremble to think. I am apprehenſive that my friend's impudence would have carried him to greater lengths than the pickpocket's in the trial, and that he would hardly have contented himſelf with running off with her clothes: and beſides, what modeſt woman, in ſuch a ſituation, would object to any conceſſions, by which ſhe might have recovered her clothes, and put herſelf into a condition to be ſeen?

SINCE

SINCE my friend's telling me this ſtory, I have been led into two or three miſtakes in walking through the ſtreets and ſquares of the politer part of this metropolis: for as I am naturally ſhort-ſighted, I have miſtaken a well-dreſſed woman's taylor, whom I have ſeen coming out of a genteel houſe with a bundle under his arm, for a gentleman who has had the good fortune to ſtrip the lady of her clothes, and is moving off in triumph with his winnings.

To what lengths this new kind of gaming might have been carried, no one can tell, if the ladies had not taken up in time, and put a ſtop to beginnings. A prudent man, who knows he is not proof againſt the temptations of play, will either keep away from maſquerades and ridotto's, or lock up his purſe in his eſcritore. But as among the ladies, the ſtaying at home is an impracticable thing, they have adopted the other caution, and very prudently leave their clothes behind them. Hence it is that caps, handkerchiefs, tippets and tuckers are rarely to be met with upon the young and handſome: for as they know their own weakneſs, and that the men are not always complaiſant enough to play with them upon credit, they throw off at their toilettes all thoſe coverings which they are in any immediate danger of loſing at a *tête à tête*.

THE ladies will, I hope, think me entitled to their thanks at leaſt, for aſcribing to their prudence that nakedneſs of dreſs, which inconſiderate and ignorant perſons have conſtantly miſtaken for wantoneſs or indiſcretion. At the ſame time I would recommend it to all young ladies who are known to be no gameſters, either to wear a covering on their necks, or to throw a cloak over their ſhoulders in all public places, leſt it ſhould be thought